

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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During the spring and summer of 1980 a 100% data recovery operation was conducted in a portion of the Delaware Park Site (7NC-E-41) by Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. of Newark, Delaware. The data recovery operation expended over 12,000 man-hours in a thorough archaeological investigation and resulted in the recovery of thousands of artifacts from surface areas, plow zone soil and almost 200 subsurface aboriginal features. Analysis of the data was aided by consultant services concentrating on the geologic historic and physical environment of the site, the identification of recovered seeds, pollen and phytoliths, and the identification of soil residues through chemical testing. All lithics, ceramics, feature configurations and provenience data was subjected to analysis by the Principal Investigator and his staff.

The resulting interpretations of aboriginal utilization of the Delaware Park Site can be summarized as follows. The Delaware Park Site was utilized primarily during the Early/Middle Woodland Period as a base camp by aboriginal peoples engaged in a variety of resource procurement activities. These activities, as reflected in the data base, included the gathering of wetland marsh and woodland vegetation, the harvesting of nut crops, the hunting of large game animals and the procurement of fish resources found in the nearby White Clay Creek.

A reconstruction of settlement and subsistence patterning, as revealed in the data and in the predictive model established prior to the data recovery operation, suggests that the Delaware Park Site, due to its strategic location near the fall line of New Castle County, was one of perhaps several major camps located in the fall line zone. The period of occupation may have been throughout the entire year with only transient camps related to the Delaware Park Site occupant's settlement system.

Investigations of intra-site function was not as revealing as was hoped. Although subsurface features were interpreted as relating to a variety of functions, including storage units, ground ovens, semisubterranean houses, hearths, possibly graves, etc., the artifactual contents did not seem to relate to the feature's implied function, or to any other function that could be determined on the basis of artifact distribution. The possible high degree of disturbance of earlier features by later site occupants is pointed to as a possible explanation of this situation.

Based on the results of the Delaware Park Site investigations a number of recommendations can be made, relating specifically to the site itself, the data base recovered and to similar excavation projects scheduled in the future. These recommendations are outlined below.

1. Every attempt should be made to assure the total preservation of that portion of the Delaware Park Site that lies between the White Clay Creek and the highway construction area. The site should be protected from natural and human disturbance including that of unauthorized relic collectors.
2. All data recovered from the Delaware Park Site investigations should be made available to serious investigators in attempts to extract additional information from the data base. Assistance, in the form of access to collections, copies of maps and field notes, etc. should be offered to such investigators.
3. The current project report should be made available to any interested person.
4. Attempts should be made to publish a condensed version of the site report for public consumption.
5. Any future construction project scheduled in the general area should be carefully examined for evidence of similar archaeological resources. Highway construction projects should be subjected to similar surveys of sufficient intensity to assure that archaeological data of this type will not be impacted.